



## **FAMILY ECONOMIC SUCCESS POLICY RESOURCE CENTER**

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### **WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT FACT SHEET**

#### **BRIEF OVERVIEW**

Workforce development incorporates specific measures to improve professional and personal growth necessary for securing a stable job and ensuring financial independence. Since a majority of low-income families experience a large amount of debt, obtaining and maintaining a job is necessary and ensures financial stability. Through workforce development, low-income families are offered the opportunity to improve their education and occupation skills in order to maintain their current jobs and increase opportunities for career advancement.

Research has demonstrated that there is an ever increasing gap between educated and uneducated individuals, which further weakens the economic stability of the uneducated population. Offering employment training programs to enhance an individual's educational level and skills can create tremendous career opportunities and result in greater family economic success. Policymakers should help promote workforce policies that will create career advancement programs and help create opportunities for low-income families to achieve educational success and ensure financial stability.

#### **WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT FACTS**

- In 2006, more than one out of four working families with children—a total of 42 million adults and children—were low-income. (Working Poor Families Project)
- Income inequality among working families increased by almost 10 percent from 2002 to 2006 as indicated by the widening gap between the share of income received by the highest-earning working families and the share received by the least affluent ones. (Working Poor Families Project)
- In 2007, almost one-half of all job openings required more than a high school education; in 2006, 57 percent of low-income working families were headed by parents with no post-secondary education. (The Workforce Alliance; Working Poor Families Project)
- In 2006, more than one in five U.S. jobs, or 22 percent, was in an occupation paying wages that fall below the federal poverty threshold. In the same year, eight states—AL, AR, LA, MS, MT, NM, SD, and WV—had more than one-third of all jobs in poverty-wage occupations. (Working Poor Families Project)
- Middle-skill jobs, which require more than a high-school diploma, but less than a four-year degree, make up the largest part of America's labor market. All too often, key industries in our country are unable to find enough sufficiently trained workers to fill these jobs. As a result, job creation and economic growth are stifled. (The Workforce Alliance)
- In a 2007 state-by-state comparison of the percentage of low-income working families with children—families with an income less than twice the federal poverty level, at least one parent who worked 50 or more weeks during the previous year, and at least one "own child" under the age of 18—New Hampshire ranked the lowest (10%) and Texas and New Mexico ranked the highest (24%). (KIDS COUNT Data Center)

*Updated: June 2009*